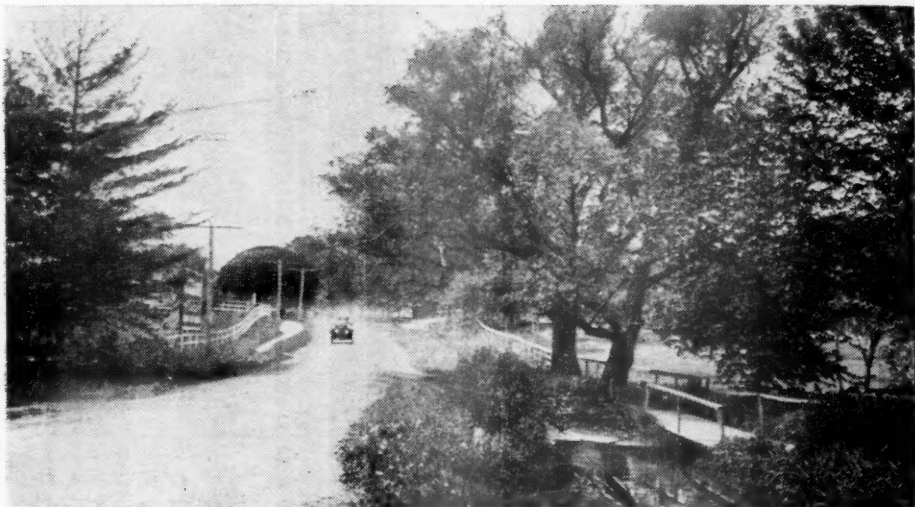


# LONG ISLAND FORUM



Brookhaven Village in 1911

Photo From Mrs. Edna Valentine Bruce

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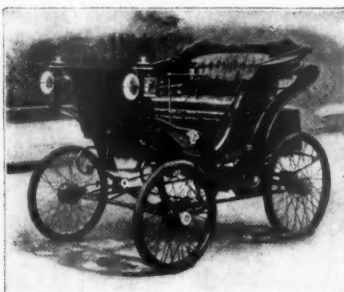
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**PAUL BAILEY, Publisher-Editor**  
Contributing Editors  
Clarence A. Wood, LL.M., Ph.D.  
John C. Huden, Ph.D.  
Robert R. Coles  
Julian Denton Smith, Nature

**A Stevens-Duryea?**

Although I feel singularly hon-  
ored to find my name on the cover  
page of the August Forum, I  
hardly believe I rate such a dis-  
tinction. The cuts of my old autos  
came out better than I had hoped  
and should be of interest to the  
real oldtimers. As for the un-



named car, it is a real antique. As  
an extremely wild guess, I would  
call it a Stevens-Duryea.

As usual I have read the August  
edition from cover to cover with  
great pleasure and interest and it  
puzzles me to know how you do  
collect such outstanding articles.

I am looking forward to enjoy-  
ing your new book.

Horace K. T. Sherwood  
Long Beach, Cal.

**Yes, the Forum Goes Far**

The Forum certainly does travel.  
I heard about my school article in  
the July issue not only from local  
readers, but from Albany to Cali-  
fornia. Some of the old sayings,  
signs, etc. used on Long Island  
would be interesting. I recall one  
old sign at Bellport years ago  
which read:

Oysters, stewed or fried,  
Hair cut and whiskers dyed;  
Doughnuts and sweet cider.  
Yours truly, Tod Ryder.  
(Mrs.) Edna Valentine Bruce  
Brookhaven

Did you know that the famo-  
us Polar Bear Division in the first  
World War was organized on Long  
Island? Rex Bache, East Meadow.  
No, we didn't. Wish we had more  
facts. Editor.

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# Some Long Island Night Birds

A Forum reader asked me if we have night birds on Long Island. By night birds was meant those that cry, call or sing at night as distinct from those we have passing through in migration.

Perhaps there is an easier way to distinguish a night bird. It is one that feeds for the most part at night. Migrating birds that we hear in the night are day feeders else they would likely not be traveling by dark for, as a rule, day feeders seem to migrate at night and night feeders during the daylight hours.

I do not believe we can consider the loon a Long Island bird for I am extremely doubtful that we have a single pair to nest on Long Island. I find them on the beach during migration, especially in the fall, but these are the tired and the weaklings.

By watching these loons on our beach I know loons can get into the air without the aid of water. These loons invariably creep, crawl, hobble, walk or whatever their awkward, clumsy, non-winged locomotion may be called, to the top of the sand dunes. When ready to fly, they leap from the summit of the nearly perpendicular south side and into a south wind. With tremendous effort of wing beating they barely skim the sand and gradually gain enough altitude to clear the breakers. Sometimes they actually leave scratch marks in the sand, yet the bird manages to remain in the air.

I realize this observation runs counter to what is in the books—that loons get into the air only from water. I have seen loons swing into flight by jumping from Jones Beach dunes.

We do have three birds which can be classed as Long Island night birds — whip-poor-will, screech owl and night heron. It takes a good

*Julian Denton Smith*

bird watcher and rare circumstances to spot a whip-poor-will but a screech owl is often observed in daylight. The night heron is flying around in the evening and early morning and makes no effort to keep out of sight—he is too big to even try to hide.

Whip-poor-wills feed on insects, low-flying insects at that. On warm, moonlit nights he may fly around feeding close to the ground from dusk to dawn. The bird very seldom rises above eye level. This makes observation extremely difficult as he never silhouettes against the sky. Gilbert and Sullivan would say "What, never?" and reply, "Well, not hardly ever!"

The "Well, not hardly ever" time was in 1930 when one caught hold of a sash bar in a greenhouse roof at Seaford. His calling awakened me and I got to see him indistinctly from beneath and only a few

feet away on the other side of the glass. He hung to the wooden sash between the roof panes for possibly ten minutes and repeated his call over and over again with barely time out to catch his breath.

I had always thought a whip-poor-will called his name—"Whip-poor-will." There is more to it, there is an extra word. It is a prefix which may mean "Mister" in bird talk. He actually says, "Chuck Whip-poor-will." I think it is necessary to be real near the bird to hear the "Chuck" for as soon as there is much distance between bird and listener, the prefix fails to carry. Close up it is definite and unmistakable.

Screech owls are mournful things. They are on the wing most of the night chasing food. About three or four o'clock they like to settle down, call it a day, and talk over the good things that came their way or enlarge upon a bit of bird gossip, or



Young Screech Owls

Photo by Edwin Way Teale

just plain moan to hear themselves.

I live in that section of Wantagh which gave the town



Night Heron

the earlier name, "Ridgewood." It came from the ridge of woods, tall oaks, paralleling the railroad tracks and five or six hundred feet to the south. Those oaks are big old timers, the kind that have been there forever. Screech owls can find wonderful holes in the old oaks. They love cavities left by rotted limbs which have dropped away, especially cavities with a southern exposure. Sometimes in winter days the face of a screech owl will appear in one of these old holes as he sits there taking a sun bath or just looking around lazily and listlessly.

How in the world screech owls ever got their name I do not know. Their calling is far from a screech. It starts with a rather extended wobbly note and descends in a shimmering scale to fade away. It is a weird, creepy sound calculated to stand the hair up on the back of your neck.

Screech owls come in two colors, reddish-brown and grayish-brown. The color has nothing to do with age, sex or any other variant — it seems to just happen that way. If a screech owl hatches

Continued on page 55

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# Miller Mott, Patchogue Pioneer

A PROMINENT resident and large landowner of Patchogue during post-Revolution days was Charles Mott. He was not, it seems, of the Mott family headed by Richard Mott who was born in Queens County in 1785 and who settled at North Babylon in the early 1800s. Charles Mott was a native of England who located in New York City before the Revolution and there amassed a considerable fortune in real estate. The Revolution, however, brought an end to Charles Mott's prosperity. Being a pronounced Tory, he fled to Canada at the outbreak of the war. When later he returned to New York he found that his extensive real estate holdings had been confiscated by the federal authorities because of his Toryism. It was then that he migrated eastward to the northerly outskirts of Patchogue.

Here he acquired a very large tract of woodland, cleared a considerable portion thereof for a farm and became as good and patriotic a citizen of the new republic as could be desired by his American-born neighbors. As a matter of fact, in time they elected him a justice of the peace and thereafter he was known as Squire Mott.

It was this Squire Mott who about 1815, following the close of the War of 1812, built a gristmill at the head of Swan Neck creek to the east of Patchogue. It stood between Montauk highway and East Lake which Mott created by damming its outlet. According to Mott family records, the mill survived for 116 years, until in fact it was destroyed by fire on Friday morning, April 24, 1931. By then it had been known for many years as Swezey's mill just as the name of the stream which turned the big paddlewheel had been shortened to Swan

creek and, near the bay into which it eventually flowed, Swan river.

Squire Mott's homestead stood on a large tract on the west side of the lake, fronting on Montauk highway, which in more modern times became the Vrooman estate, subsequently acquired by Admiral George W. Sumner following his retirement from the U. S. Navy after a long and brilliant career. The extent of Squire Mott's real estate holdings at the time of his death may be judged by the fact that he bequeathed to each of eight sons and three daughters a 32-acre farm in the vicinity of Patchogue.

As for the gristmill, it was built of timbers hand-hewn from local oak trees. Its wheels differed from most Long Island mills of the period in that they carried overshot buckets. Its corner posts were 12 inches of solid oak and remained intact for the life of the structure as did most of its timbers.

*Richard A. Winsche*

After his death, Squire Mott's homestead was purchased by Michael Sharp, a native of Ireland who had located a home and livery stable on Railroad avenue in the western part of the village. He moved the building to the corner of Railroad avenue and Church street. It was built almost as solidly as the mill and stood for years until, having fallen into decay, was eventually torn down. We have heard that it was used for a time as the Methodist Church but this cannot be verified.

As in most of his activities, Squire Mott ran his mill along original lines. Using his own large sloop, he sailed out of Great South Bay through Fire Island Inlet to Philadelphia where he would purchase a cargo of flaxseed. At the mill he had his own method of extracting the oil which he barreled and transported by sloop to the New York markets. He also processed flax as well as grinding grain grown on local farms, including his own.

Following the Squire's



The Old Mill, 1815-1931

Sketched and Etched by Joseph P. Di Gemma

death the mill was acquired by Richard Saxton who had a large farm in East Patchogue near the bay. Still later it was purchased by Nathaniel O. Swezey who, with Edward H. Terry owned a mill on Patchogue Lake in the western part of the village, near where the former lace mill now stands. It was Terry, a native of Southold, who used this mill in which to manufacture electricity and supply Patchogue with its first electric street lights and other electric service.

After operating the Mott mill for a while, Nathaniel Swezey disposed of it to his brother Gelston G. Swezey who owned and ran it for many years. Known as Gil Swezey, he was active in the Democratic party as well as being a highly respected citizen and a successful miller. He was the last proprietor of what had now come to be known as Swezey's mill. A misfortune from which he never wholly recovered was the drowning of an infant son in the flue of the mill.

Another Patchogue industry during the 1800s was a paper mill erected by John S. Havens at the foot of Canaan Lake to the north of the village. Havens manufactured wrapping paper from wheat and rye straw and the product had a good market for a number of years among local merchants and others. When

the supply of straw ran out, as farmers reduced their grain crops for potatoes, Havens utilized "bent grass" from the salt meadows near the bay. He eventually sold out but his successor failed and soon thereafter the mill went up in smoke and flames.

In 1900 one William J. Mott, a great-great-grandson of the Squire, born in 1867 near Palace Brook, to the south of Canaan Lake, purchased thirty acres of woodland between the brook and Waverly avenue in West Patchogue. Clearing most of the land, he farmed it for many years. William Mott must have inherited a flare for originality from his great-great-grandson, as he purchased a thousand young cedar trees from a landowner in the middle of the island and planted them about five feet apart along the boundaries of his farm. Some of these stalwart cedars still stand, ranging in height from twenty to more than thirty feet.

#### Scoterist of 1904

I would not want to miss a single issue as every one is so very interesting and brings memories of days gone by. The "Birth of the South Bay Scooter" by Capt. Wilbur A. Corwin, in the January number, is very wonderful. I well remember, back in 1904 when my husband was in the Smith's Point lifesaving crew, how we used to go scootering and it was fun.

Mrs. Maurice S. French  
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# The Commack Methodist Church

THE first Methodist sermon ever heard in Commack was delivered by one John Phillips, a tailor stationed at Huntington with British troops during the Revolution. As a result of the sermon, a Methodist society was organized at Commack in 1783. After leaving for England in the British evacuation, Phillips later returned to Commack and, having adopted Pelagianism, converted some of his Methodist friends to this new sect, thus causing a serious division in the church. On one occasion, when the circuit preacher, Rev. John Finnegan, was on hand to speak, Nehemiah Brush stood guard at the church door to keep Phillips and his followers from entering. By 1802, however, Phillips had left town and the last trace of Pelagianism had disappeared from Commack.

The first conference preacher came to Commack in 1784 in the person of Phillip Cox and the following year Ezekiel Cooper took over at a time when there were only five Methodist societies on Long Island with a combined membership of 154, a gain since the close of the Revolution two years before of more than 600 per cent. That same year of 1785 the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was officially named with a membership throughout the country of 18,000 and 104 duly appointed preachers, most of whom were "circuit riders" traveling from church to church within their circuit.

On Long Island the preachers were Peter Moriarity, Robert Cloud, Thomas Ware and William Phoebeus, the latter serving Commack, then still known by its original Indian name of Winne-Comac. Mr. Phoebeus was still in charge when Commack's first church was built in 1789, preceded on Long Island only by the New-

*H. P. Horton*

town structure, erected in 1785, and that at Searingtown in 1788. This makes the Commack Methodist Church building the oldest still standing on the island.

Among those active in the church at that time were Nehemiah Brush, James Hubbs and Samuel Brush. The land for the church was purchased from Van Hadah Robbins for two pounds five shillings. The trustees who signed the deed included Nehemiah Brush, Jacob Wheeler, Charles Peters, Joel Rogers and Jacob Haff. The witnesses were John Wilson and Nehemiah Tompkins. In 1791 Benjamin Abbott was appointed co-worker with Preacher Phoebeus. Soon thereafter Mr. Abbott was succeeded by the famous Negro preacher, widely known as Black Harry.

Beginning in 1806 Commack's preacher was M. B. Bull, preaching there 15 times during the year besides ministering to other churches in the circuit. In 1810 Commack became a part of the Suffolk County Circuit, the other churches in the circuit being at Hauppauge and Sag Harbor with other villages holding services in schools and homes. To cover the circuit once a month, the circuit rider had to travel some 250 miles. Meanwhile sermons were

preached by lay members, both men and women.

In 1822, however, one William M. Stillwell of New York, who had seceded from Methodism, began touring Long Island preaching his own brand of religion. He gained some followers at Northport (Cow Harbor), Hauppauge and Commack, Peter Hill and John Weeks being among his most vociferous disciples. At Centerport the Stillwellites gained control of the church and moved the little building to Commack about a mile south of the original church. Soon thereafter, this second church became Congregationalist, then Presbyterian but eventually it closed its doors and its chairs were acquired by the regular Commack Church wherein, as a constant reminder of bygone days, they are still used.

When in 1835-36 the Commack Methodists remodeled the present structure of 1789 the building committee consisted of P. Wicks, Selah Brush, Moses Smith, F. Hildreth and the Rev. William K. Stafford. The church was again remodeled in 1859-60 and in 1889, as a part of its 100th anniversary celebration, a parsonage was erected. Since that celebration the church has continued to grow steadily in membership while from time to time further improvements have been made,



The Church, Now in Its 168th Year

the most extensive in 1952 under the ministry of the Rev. R. R. Roberts and the supervision of the board of trustees consisting of Clark C. Paye, D. H. Hallock, James Cowie, Jesse Hubbs, Henry Shea, Joseph Halleran, William Heberer, Edward Halleran and Mrs. John M. Shea.

The foregoing facts were taken from a much more detailed history of the church compiled in 1953 by Pastor Roberts, a copy of which was submitted to the Forum by Mrs. John M. Shea.

#### A Poosepatuck Legend

The 43d Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, page 277, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1928, contained the following legend as told to Prof. Frank G. Speck in 1906 by Moses (Mase) Bradley, a resident of the Poosepatuck Indian Reservation at Mastic in Brookhaven town. The Poosepatucks were a branch of the Unkechog (Uncachogue) tribe of which Tobaccus was chief:

A Poosepatuck village was situated on the Suganeck River near the Great South Bay on Long Island. As was their custom, the Mohaks (Iroquois) appeared before the town to gather tribute. The Poosepatucks decided to offer resistance, and made the enemy aware of it. So it was decided that they should engage in a battle. Should the Mohawks win they were to have the handsomest girl in the village as a prize. Otherwise the Poosepatucks were to remain unmolested.

The battle that ensued consumed a day, the Poosepatucks lost, and the sachem Tobagus's daughter, as the handsomest girl there, was carried away by the victors.

(Dr.) John C. Huden  
University of Vermont  
Burlington, Vt.

The Forum is a publication I could not do without. George H. Hildreth, Riverhead. (The editor's thanks to Suffolk's senior ex-District Attorney).

#### The Geology of Long Island

by M. L. Fuller

Wrps. 231pp. U.S.G S.PP82. 1914.  
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#### L. I. FORUM INDEX

The Queens Borough Public Library, 89-14 Parsons Blvd., Jamaica, sells a complete index of the Long Island Forum for the years 1938-1947 inclusive, at \$1 postpaid. Also for the years 1948-1952 inclusive, at 50 cents postpaid. They were compiled by Miss Marguerite V. Doggett, Librarian L. I. Collection, and may be obtained by addressing her at the Library.

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# Pirates On Fire Island

THIS tale of pirates on Fire Island, is one of those stories which have been passed down from one generation to the other, but I have good reason for believing that it is more fact than legend. Among other things it is completely lacking in bloodshed or improbable situations, and is the kind of event that may well have happened on that desolate stretch of beach many years ago.

On a crisp, cold day in the early 1800s, four farmers having prepared their acres and houses against the approaching winter, decided to try their hands at a morning's sport. For this they sailed across the bay to Fire Island, landing about opposite what is now known as Great River. Their intention was to bag some of the wild geese

*Douglas Tuomey*

## Editor's Note

Mr. Tuomey is building editor of the magazine *Living*, published by Street & Smith. He also writes two nationally syndicated newspaper columns and does special feature articles for the *New York Times*. Among his other activities have been seven books. The following tale will appear in his forthcoming book, "The Saga of Fire Island."

whose honking could be heard at night, and who favored the still waters of the numerous ponds, and the heavy growth of rushes which lined the bay shore at that point.

Midway across the bay they noticed that the sun was becoming obscured and a wall of deep fog was rolling over the dunes of the island and bearing down upon them, completely shutting out the shore for which they were

headed. Nothing daunted by an unusually heavy fog, they wrapped their coats about them and held course, soon to grate upon the sandy beach. Once there and the boat secured against drifting, they lifted out their heavy fowling-pieces and started to skirt the edge of the water. No luck attended them, but hearing the whir of heavy wings toward the center of the island they spread out and worked in that direction. Before long the sound of the surf came through the fog, and slipping down the face of the dunes they found themselves on the beach.

The visibility here was not more than thirty or forty feet, so signaling instead of speaking, they agreed to string out, each man walking so that the

Continued on page 53



1880 Photo of Fire Island, Taken From the Lighthouse

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## Bodine Castle Tunnel

With regard to Bodine Castle at L. I. City (Feb. Forum), I can vouch for the truth of an underground passage there as my father and grandfather, George C. and Thomas I. Andrews, were builders and often did work for the Bodines. They knew of and saw the passage. It was used in Civil War days to conceal and allow slaves who had escaped from the South to reach a boat at the East river. The street in front of the castle was Bodine street, on which I lived for many years.

I am a descendant of Benjamin L'Hommiedieu who settled in Southold in 1690. Some of his descendants married Bodines who were also French Huguenots and the name originally was Bodein. My Bodine cousins live in the state of Washington. Not much left of the castle as it is being torn down for a bridge is being built from there to Welfare Island.

Florence E. Gesser  
1317 Bellevue Avenue  
Syracuse, N. Y.

## Old Golf Clubs

In one of your syndicated newspaper columns you mention about some of the old golf clubs as established in this country some years ago. One of the oldest is the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club, which was one of the charter members of the United States Golf Association, formed December 22, 1894. There were five charter members of this association, namely: Newport Golf Club, Newport, R. I.; Shinnecock Hills Golf Club; The Country Club, Brookline, Mass.; St. Andrew's Golf Club, Yonkers-On-Hudson, N. Y., and the Chicago Golf Club.

I am certain the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club was established before 1894. As you state in your article the Maidstone Club was incorporated in 1891. However, there was a tennis club formed in East Hampton during the summer of 1882. The tennis courts were established at that time on the site of the present Edwards Theatre on Main Street.

You will be interested to know that the same golf pro, Mr. Charles Thom, has been the pro at this club for the last fifty years and is still going strong.

One of the early pros at the Maidstone Club was John Shippen, a Shinnecock Indian, who was a great golfer and is still a golf pro at a public golf course in New Jersey. I remember Shippen very well as I caddied for him at the Maidstone Club more than fifty years ago.

Kenneth E. Davis  
Manager Maidstone Club,  
East Hampton

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## Woolsey Family Cemetery

I very much enjoyed Dr. Wood's fine article on Rev. Benjamin Woolsey of Dosoris (Feb. Forum). However, it should be mentioned that the Woolsey family cemetery has been moved from its original location to a point just north of the end of Dosoris lane, and is now well kept up.

The descendants of the Woolsey family still retain ownership and the right to be buried there, and the permanent upkeep is entrusted to a local florist and landscaper.

Peter L. VanSantvoord  
Glen Cove

## Riverhead's Lost Cannon

In the year 1918, while standing in front of my automobile show room on Peconic Avenue, Riverhead, near where George Morrell's garage now stands, a local, well known, elderly gentleman approached and, during our conversation, mentioned that, at the close of the Civil War, as a boy, he watched a group of men drag an old Revolutionary War cannon from the Court House lawn, down Peconic Avenue, with the intention of shooting it off in celebration of the victorious closing of the war. But, about where we stood, it slid off the road, down the embankment and, as they were unable to get it back, it was left there and was eventually covered up when the road was widened.

Has anyone any information concerning either this event or the cannon?

Walter A. Grabie  
Care L. I. Forum

## Mott's Reptilian Tenant

I was very much interested in Mrs. Jennie Byrne's "Well Snake; Sick Man" in the February Forum, for I, too, had known a Mr. Everett Mott. As a friend of my mother, Mr. Mott had been a welcomed guest for dinner, whenever he happened to visit Echo (Port Jefferson Station). During one such visit he told us in all seriousness that one day, while skating, he had cut a hole in the ice to get a drink.

About a year later he found himself frequently choked by something coming up into his throat and could get relief only by pressing his fingers against his throat. This action would dislodge the creature (he believed it to be a snake) and cause it to go back down to his stomach, where it apparently had grown a great deal larger since first joining Everett as a dinner companion.

Well, anyway, he finally finished off the creature by eating nothing for two days; then swallowing a tablespoon of turpentine.

John M. Baker  
Huntington

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The numerous highways and railroad accidents resulting in serious injuries or fatalities, reported in the papers these days is a matter of grave concern to all of us, and many people are apt to regard them as a product of the automobile age. A perusal of old Long Island newspapers from the early days of railroading to the coming of the auto in the late 1890s will reveal many serious accidents in the horse and buggy era. Horses kicking owners or drivers to death, running away and seriously injuring or killing their passengers, carriages hit by trains, pedestrians killed while walking the tracks, a common practice in those days, were all common news items then.

Austin Corbin, president of the LIRR for fifteen years, and his

coachman, were killed by a runaway team in June 1896. Locomotive engineers, as the writer can testify from his experience as a fireman, were often obliged to close the throttle and apply the brakes as they anxiously watched a horsedrawn vehicle approach a crossing, but fortunately all that he saw stopped in time.

One of the worst collisions between a locomotive and carriage occurred on May 31, 1897, when a tally-ho full of young people was struck by a locomotive in Valley Stream where the Merrick Road crosses the present West Hempstead Branch of the LIRR known at that time as the New York Bay Extension R.R. Decoration Day came on Sunday that year and the holiday was celebrated on Monday. The following account of the disaster is taken from the South Side Signal of Babylon, dated June 5, 1897.

"On Monday afternoon a tally-ho coach drawn by six horses and loaded with a party of young people from Brooklyn, was struck by a Long Island Railroad train at the Valley Stream crossing. Five persons were killed, and thirteen others injured, several seriously.

"The approach to the crossing is through a piece of woods, and a clear view of the track in either direction is not to be had. An electric bell was there to give warning of the approach of trains. It was claimed that the bell did not ring on Monday and the engineer did not sound whistle or bell before reaching the crossing. Others assert, however, that the bell was heard and the locomotive whistle was blown in time for the driver of the coach to avert the collision. The driver claims to have heard nothing but the blowing of horns and the chatter of those in the coach. This is probably true, but the driver, Harry McCormack, had two assistants with him and it was his plain duty before reaching the crossing to stop the coach and send an assistant ahead to see if the track was clear.

"The party was composed of  
Continued back cover

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## Pirates on Fire Island

Continued from page 49

dim form of the one in front of him would just be visible.

In the lead was a man by the name of L'Hommodeau, supposedly the best shot and more experienced gunner in the group. Suddenly, the man behind him, one James Telfer, saw him come to an abrupt halt, and with legs widely outspread drop his gun to his waist. On coming up to L'Hommodeau, Telfer saw the reason for his sudden action and tenseness.

There in the fog with hand to belt, stood three men. If ever landmen set eyes on typical bucaniers it was now. The strangers were dressed in short, coarse trousers, heavy sleeveless jerkins and were bare-footed. One man wore a padded hat of sorts, with a cross of iron running basket-like over it, and held by an iron ring encircling his

forehead. In the belt of each man was the inevitable knife, and slung from one of them was that most formidable of all hand-weapons, a boarding-axe. Only one man had a fire-arm.

For several minutes the groups regarded each other, not a word being spoken. Meanwhile, L'Hommodeau's other two companions had appeared out of the fog and now four heavy fowling-pieces were pointed in the strangers' direction.

Upon the appearance of the fourth goose-hunter, one of the men muttered something in a low voice, and one by one his two companions stepped back warily into the murk, leaving the one man with the pistol still confronting L'Hommodeau's group. On the sound of another low voice from out of the fog, this man held up one hand, palm out in the universal language of peace, and stepped backward until

he was lost in the shroud of mist.

The hunters lost no time in back-tracking the way they had come, urged on by hoarse shouts from the direction of the beach. Telfer, who had had experience in the early Indian wars brought up the rear, firing once when he heard something crashing through the underbrush close behind him.

Gaining their boat and completely breathless, the four men made haste to shove off. Halfway home and having gained at least some of their composure, they exchanged notes regarding the experience. All were of the opinion that the strangers were definitely not Englishmen, but rather Portuguese or Spanish, and most likely part of a landing party from a ship lying off shore.

On reaching the mainland they told their story to neigh-

Continued next page

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## Pirates on Fire Island

Continued from page 53

bors and families, only to have it greeted with hoots of derision, as a fine fabrication to cover up the failure of four excellent marksmen to come home without as much as a fish-tainted coot between them. Nevertheless, all four men held to their story until they died, and it was told to me by one of Telfer's great-granddaughters. And so we leave the only pirate tale I ever heard, in which no ship, no long-boat, no chest of gold and no dead man was seen.

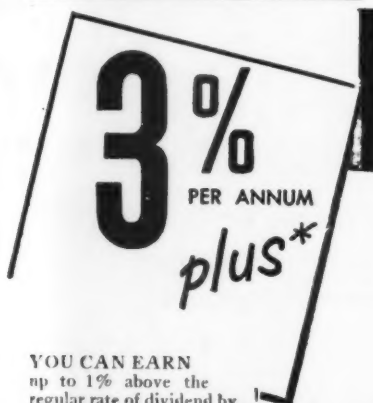
### Many Thanks, Judge

On the cover of the January Forum the picture of the "Old Court House" at Mineola brings back many memories—all pleasant. Your contributions to the history of Long Island have been immensely enjoyed by us.

"Historic Long Island in Pictures, Prose and Poetry" is a book that can be picked up and enjoyed at any time.

Edgar F. Hazleton  
Surrogate, Suffolk County

I now have my mother and sister also reading your excellent Long Island Forum. Ralph Clymer Hawkins, New Rochelle. (Secretary-General of The General Court of the Order of the Founders and Patriots of America). Note: Mr. Hawkins is a nephew of Suffolk's Hon. Richard W. Hawkins.



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## Wyandanch's Son

The son of Chief Wyandanch of the Montauk Indians and grand sachem of the Long Island tribes was named Wiacombone, which has been spelled in various ways. He died of smallpox in 1662. Wyandanch II who may have been Wiacombone's son became chief of the Montauks and was acknowledged as such by John Mulford of East Hampton, Justice of the Peace, in 1703. There is a possibility, however, that the second Wyandanch was the son of the first Wyandanch's daughter rather than of Wiacombone who is said to have died in his twentieth year. Editor.

## Boston Scooterist of 1904

You may be interested in the following item from the March 18, 1904 number of the Patchogue Advance: "The fame of the South Bay scooters is spreading over the country. Last week A. V. Robinson, a prominent yachtsman and president of the Boston Ice Yacht Club, came here to inspect the scooters. He placed an order for two for next season. G. R. R., Patchogue.

In its 20th year the Forum is as fine as ever. S. J. Titterton, Jamaica.

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## Night Birds

Continued from Page 44

a reddish brown, that is the color he will always be. If he comes from the shell a grayish brown, that is the color he will die. In size a screech owl is about like a robin.

The night heron is a water bird better known as a quawk, the black-crowned night heron. He has a greenish-black crown and back, blue gray wings, and white under parts. The bill is a dark color and the legs yellow. He feeds on water creatures generally and does this after sundown and before sunup. He flies silently and often, in shifting from one feeding ground to another, will let out with the characteristic "Quawk." It is a startling sound especially when near at hand.

Night heron sleep during the day as a general thing. They gather in low marshland trees, particularly wild cherry for some reason all their own. Their identification is easy as no other marsh or bay bird looks anything like a quawk.

If one listens carefully in a quiet location, he can hear innumerable pipings, chattering and calling in the night skies of spring and fall. The sounds are from the hosts of birds in migration. The flocks are never absolutely still, there is always some chatter as though to keep the group encouraged and in a tight unit. The passing of the migrations makes brilliant oral interludes in our search for night birds.

### Flushing's Night Herons

I read Julian Denton Smith's interesting article on "Egrets at



Night Herons at Flushing

Jones Beach" (Feb. Forum) in which he asked if any other readers had witnessed a "ganging up of herons" on the island.

I have seen the night herons that sleep through the day in a large weeping birch tree at Flushing and spend their nights feeding in the swamps. They are quite a sight as they return every morning.

While I was vacationing at Harper's Ferry in West Virginia I would see a large flock of crows fly over the Potomac to Maryland each morning at five o'clock, returning at 5 p.m. There were so many they sounded like a windstorm.

Hildegard Lemcke  
Flushing

### Egrets at Moriches

In re Julian Denton Smith's article on "Egrets at Jones Beach" (Feb. Forum), at about the same

time (Sept. 1956), south of Twin Ponds at Center Moriches, my wife and I observed a similar sight. I took several colored pictures and included several in my recent showing of eastern Long Island Birds at the Baldwin Bird Club.

Howard M. Van Cleaf  
Rockville Centre

### In Memoriam

Howard Nathan Fordham, a native of Sag Harbor, died August 22, 1956 at his home of retirement in Santa Ana, California. His occasional letters in the Forum about Long Island as he knew it before migrating to the west coast many years ago to follow the teaching profession were always interesting.

I would surely miss the Forum as the articles published therein grow more and more interesting. The Forum forever! Louis T. Vail, New Port Richey, Florida.

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## Dr. Daniel Menema, Patriot

I READ with keen interest Marion F. Overton's account of Dr. Daniel Menema in the May 1956 issue. In the July 1954 number John Tooker mentioned the fact that Menema and Dr. Ogden, his teacher, were refused permission by the British to dress General Nathaniel Woodhull's wounds while he lay streaming blood in Hinchman's tavern. I have some more information not generally known about Menema, and among the three of us we might piece together a somewhat respectable biography.

After the Battle of Long Island on August 27, 1776, New Lots was one of four townships in Kings County converted into a billeting section for Continental prisoners of officer rank. Here were quartered, among others, Lieutenant Jabez Fitch, who fortunately kept a diary, and Captain Ozias Bissell, both members of Huntington's 17th Connecticut Regiment

*Dr. Charles A. Huguenin*

and both taken prisoners during the battle.

It was Dr. Menema who administered the inoculation of Fitch, Bissell, and an Ensign Eales in addition to some civilians at New Lots against the dreaded scourge of small-

pox. This inoculation was performed with the germ of smallpox itself; vaccination, or inoculation with cowpox, was not introduced by Jenner until 1798.

Dr. Menema infected his patients on Tuesday evening, May 13, 1777, between five

Continued on next page



Capture of General Nathaniel Woodhull, August 27, 1776

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## Dr. Daniel Menema

Continued from page 56

and six o'clock. Between this date and June 14, the Doctor visited his patients eleven times as the disease ran its course, and at the terminal visit he charged for his services—three dollars apiece.

Diarist Fitch mentions him again in subsequent entries, and we glean from the entry for Friday, August 15, that he must have possessed a charming personality. In a company of officers gathered at Wyckoff's, the doctor and a little-known officer named Major (Benjamin?) Bowne were motivators of "considerable diversion." On Wednesday, September 3, he was the bearer of certain news, the nature of which tested the credulity of the billeted officers. Fitch's diary is often thus tantalizingly irritating in its succinctness, but as a captive he had to be careful of the nature of the material which he committed to writing. Parolees were under oath not to venture beyond certain confined limits nor to "do or say any Thing contrary to the Interest of his Majesty or his Government."

It is not unlikely that during these months of 1777 Dr. Menema, too, was a parolee, for on February 6 of the following year we find him confined in the dreaded Provost Prison on lower Manhattan. Into the converted Debtors' Prison were herded at the time among others Colonel Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga; Colonel Robert Magaw, Commandant of Fort Washington before its capture; Judge John Fell of New Jersey, "the great Tory hunter"; and Menema's old patient, Captain Bissell, who had violated his parole by going two and one-half miles off limits to see his wife. Menema was charged, according to Colonel Elias Boudinot, who was Washington's Commissary-General of Prisoners, with "going from his parole and speaking against the (British) Government." Men-

Continued next page



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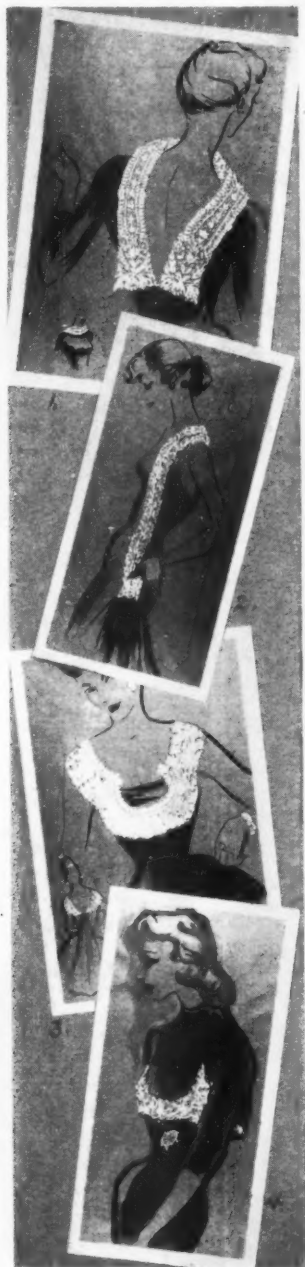
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**Heirloom Laces In Modern Fashion**

If you are one of the fortunate ones who have a piece—or more—of heirloom lace, there is no need to wait for a wedding to use it. Looking through a box of rare old laces one day at New York's Opportunity Shop, of which she



is a member of the Board of Managers, Mrs. John E. Hill had a mental flash as to how the lace could contribute to today's high fashion. "We must show people how to use real lace in clothes other than bridal gowns," she said.

As a result she had the idea of staging a design competition sponsored by the Shop, utilizing the talents and ingenuity of the students at the Traphagen School of Fashion.

At their drawing boards in the school's classrooms, the Traphagen pupils soon translated the heirloom laces into completely new uses. Brussels, duchesse, point de Venise, point de gaz, Irish crochet laces, etc., which once served as now-out-of-date collars, fichus, jackets, which of course it was stipulated should not be cut, were turned into romantic trimmings for today's smart styles without sacrilege of scissors.

Pictured are four of the prize designs: (1) by Bonnie Levine; (2) by Bessie Karst; (3) Rosario Vallarta; (4) Etta Rosenberg. Miss Levine and Miss Vallarta made the poster illustrations for their own original designs, and posters of the other two were done by Vera Goldberger, an illustration student at Traphagen. The posters were displayed at the New York Coliseum together with some of the laces, which were quickly sold.

Run by volunteers with profits going to the Community Service Society's charities, the Opportunity Shop accepts gifts of household goods and clothing. Often estates contribute valuable antiques to be sold for this admirable cause—among them there are from time to time some of these precious old laces. The lace fashion posters shown here, together with others, will be on view through the month of March at the Traphagen School of Fashion, 1680 Broadway (at 52nd St.), New York, and the public is invited to see them.

**Dr. Daniel Menema**

Continued from page 57

ema denied the validity of the charges lodged against him. Notwithstanding, the doctor was apparently marked by the British as a dangerous man. On February 11 when Boudinot sought to effect his exchange for a British prisoner held by the Americans,

Major-General James Robertson, British Commandant of New York City, objected to his release. Robertson referred to his breach of parole as a "rebellion to make an Insurrection."

We do not know how long Menema was subjected in this three-storied stone building to the indignities of a cruel tyrant named Captain William Cunningham, whose name "became a by-word of horror in the annals of the times," and his deputy, Sergeant Keefe, "one of the most cold-blooded monsters that ever existed." It was Provost Marshall Cunningham who rudely tore into pieces the letters that Nathan Hale wrote to his aged parents and friends the night before he was hanged from an apple tree, declaring at the same time "that the rebels should never know that they had a man in their army who could die with so much firmness."

I want to get an additional copy of the January issue to send to a relative in the West who, I'm sure, will be greatly interested in Wilbur Corwin's article on the South Bay scooter. A. Smith Petty, Patchogue.

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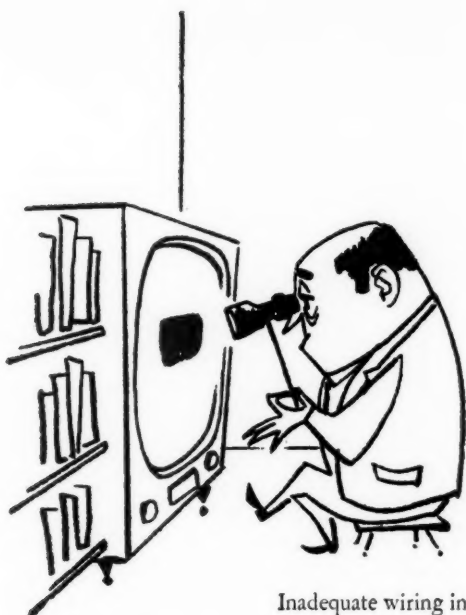
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## 1897 Crossing Tragedy

Continued from page 52

members of the Alpha Delta Theta Society of the Greene Av. Baptist Church, Brooklyn, and their destination was a grove in Lynbrook. The killed were: Winslow W. Lewis, George Pashley, Leslie Roberts, Dora Bertsch, and Gilbert Smith. The list of injured is as follows: John J. Lewis, Walter W. Wellbrock, Lawrence K. Barnes, Earl Barnes, Emily Bertsch, Clara L. Stewart, Annie Andrus, Harry McCormack, (driver,) Florence De-Betts, Ella Pashley, Richard H. Bates, Edna Bulmer, and Ray N. Stillman. Those who escaped injury were Thomas Hall Wyatt, Miss M. H. Henn, Harry Lewis, Bess A. Gibson, Edward Kenny and Richard Gribben. McCormack had driven his horses over the crossing and the coach was fairly on the rails when struck by the locomotive. The seriously injured were conveyed to St. John's Hospital in Brooklyn by special train, and the less seriously injured were taken to their homes."

The Walter F. Wellbrock mentioned above later became a medical doctor and spent most of his life practising in Lindenhurst.

The railroad did not begin scheduled operations on that branch until June 30, 1897, so it is not clear whether the locomotive that struck the coach was running light or pulling a work train. The name of the engineer is known. It was Joseph Colgan, whose father before him was a locomotive engineer named James Colgan who ran trains when the western terminus was at South Ferry at the foot of Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn. Joseph E. Colgan, grandson of James and son of Joseph, who recently retired from the LIRR after long service, is a personal friend of the writer.

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